

# Bruce Lee's Fighting Method

## BASIC TRAINING

### Introduction

This book was in the making in 1966 and most of the photographs were shot then. The late Bruce Lee intended to publish this book years ago but decided against it when he learned that martial arts instructors were using his name to promote themselves. It was quite common to hear comments like: "I taught Bruce Lee" or "Bruce Lee taught me jeet kune do." And Bruce may never have seen or known these martial artists.

Bruce didn't want people to use his name to promote themselves or their schools with false pretenses. He didn't want them to attract students this way, especially the young teens.

But after his death, his widow, Linda, felt that Bruce had contributed so much in the world of the martial arts that it would be a great loss if the knowledge of Bruce would die with him. Although the book can never replace the actual teaching and knowledge that Bruce Lee possessed, it will enhance you, the serious martial artist, in developing your skill in fighting.

Bruce always believed that all martial artists train diligently for one single purpose - defend themselves. Whether we are in judo, karate, aikido, kung fu, etcetera, our ultimate goal is to prepare ourselves for any situation.

### Jeet Kune Do

***Jeet Kune Do was founded by Bruce Lee  
because he felt  
the martial arts were too confined.***

***You can't fight in pattern he used to say  
because an attack  
can be baffling and not refined.***

***Jeet Kune Do was created by Bruce Lee  
to show us  
that an old art must transform.***

***Like the day turns to night and  
night, to day  
the way of fighting must also reform.***

***Bruce Lee developed Jeet Kune Do***

*but wished  
he didn't have a name for it!*

*Because the very words, Jeet Kune Do,  
already indicate  
that it's another martial arts form.*

*Any form or style does restrict  
and his belief is now in conflict.*

## CHAPTER 1 : The Fighting Man Exercise

### Stamina Exercise

Although you have the right attitude,  
It's not enough to avoid a strife.

Although you have a heart of fortitude,  
It's no assurance of saving your life.

You may have spent years in training  
In the art of fighting you love so much.

But if you are winded in a sparring,  
It proves that your condition is such

You need plenty of workout on the road,  
Running two, three or more miles a day  
Until your body can take more load.

Then comes a day you see the light,  
You look up at the sky and then replay:

"Skill in performance is all right,  
But it's not enough to prove you might."

---

### Aerobic Exercises

One of the most neglected elements of martial artists is the physical workout. Too much time is spent in developing skill in techniques and not enough in physical participation.

Practicing your skill in fighting is important, but so is maintaining your overall physical condition. Actually both are needed to be successful in a real fight. Training is a skill of disciplining your mind, developing your power and supplying endurance to your body. Proper training is for the purpose of building your body and avoiding activities or substances that will deteriorate or injure it.

Bruce Lee was a specimen of health. He trained every day and consumed only the proper food. Although he drank tea, he never drank coffee - instead he normally consumed milk. He was a martinet who never let his work interfere with his training. Even when he was sent to India to find suitable locations for filming, he took along his running shoes.

Lee's daily training consisted of aerobic exercises, plus others which were patterned to develop his skill in fighting. He varied his exercises to avoid boredom. One of his favorite exercises was running four miles a day in 24 to 25 minutes. He would change his tempo while running - after several miles of constant, even strides, he would sprint several feet and then return to easier running. Between changes in running tempo, he would also shuffle his feet. Lee was not particular where he ran: at the beach, in parks or woods, up and down hills or on surfaced streets.

Besides running, he also rode an exercycle to develop his endurance, legs and cardiovascular muscles. He usually rode full speed - 35 to 40 miles an hour continuously for 45 minutes to an hour. Frequently, he would ride his exercycle right after his running.

Another aerobic exercise that Lee scheduled in his routine was skipping rope, which you can adopt. This exercise not only develops your stamina and leg muscles, but also improves you, makes you "light on your feet." Only recently, physiologists have learned, by several tests, that skipping rope is more beneficial than jogging. Ten minutes of skipping rope is equivalent to 30 minutes of jogging. Both are very beneficial exercises for the cardiovascular system.

Skipping rope properly is one of the best exercises for developing a sense of balance. First, skip on one foot, holding the other in front of you; then rotate your foot, skipping on the alternate foot with each revolution of the rope, from a gradual pace to a really fast tempo. Minimize your arm-swing; instead, use your wrists to swing the rope over. Lift your foot slightly above the ground, just enough for the rope to pass. Skip for three minutes (equivalent to a round in a boxing match); then rest one minute only, before you continue for another round. Three rounds of this exercise are sufficient for a good workout. As you become conditioned to skipping, you can omit the rest period and do the exercise for as long as 30 minutes straight. The best rope is made of leather with ball bearings in the handles.

Additional endurance exercises are shadowboxing and actual sparring. Shadowboxing is a good agility exercise which also builds up your speed. Relax

your body and learn to move easily and smoothly. At first concentrate on your form and move with lightness on your feet until it becomes natural and comfortable- then work faster and harder. It is a good idea to start your workout with shadowboxing to loosen your muscles. Imagine your worst enemy stands before you and you are going to demolish him. If you use your imagination intensely, you can instill into yourself an almost real fighting frame of mind. Besides developing stamina, shadowboxing increases your speed, creates ideas and establishes techniques to be used spontaneously and intuitively. Going several rounds is the best way to learn proper footwork.

Too many beginners are too lazy to drive themselves. Only by hard and continuous exercise will you develop endurance. You have to drive yourself to the point of exhaustion ("out of breath" and expect muscle ache in a day or two). The best endurance training method seems to be a lengthy period of exercise interspersed with many brief but high-intensity endeavours. Stamina-types of exercise should be done gradually and cautiously increased. Six weeks in this kind of training is a minimum for any sports that require considerable amount of endurance. It takes years to be in peak condition and, unfortunately, stamina is quickly lost when you cease to maintain high conditioning exercises. According to some medical experts, you lose most of your benefit from exercises if you skip more than a day between workouts.

### ***Warming Up***

To warm up, select light, easy exercises to loosen your muscles and to prepare them for more strenuous work. Besides improving your performance, warming-up exercises are necessary to prevent injury to your muscles. No smart athlete will use his hand or leg violently without first warming it up carefully. These light exercises should dictate as closely as possible the ensuing, more strenuous types of movements.

How long should you warm up? This depends on several aspects. If you live in a colder area, or during the cold winter, you have to do longer warm-up exercises than do those who live in a warmer climate. Longer warming-up exercises than do those who live in a warmer climate. Longer warming-up is recommended in the early morning than in the afternoon. Generally, five or ten minutes of war-up exercises are adequate but some performers need much more. A ballet dancer spends at least two hours. He commences with very basic movements, gradually but consistently increasing the activityand intensity, until he is ready to make his appearance.

### ***Exercises***

Bruce Lee learned that certain exercises can help you greatly in your performance, and others can impede or even impair your execution of techniques. He found that

beneficial exercises are those that do not cause antagonistic tension in your muscles.

Your muscles respond differently to different exercises. During a static or slow exercise such as a handstand or lifting heavy weights such as a barbell, the muscles on both sides of the joints operate strongly to set the body in a desirable position. But in a rapid activity such as running, jumping or throwing, the muscles that close the joints contract and the muscles directly opposite elongate to allow the movement. Although there is still tension on both muscles, the strain is considerably less on the elongated, or lengthened one.

When there is excessive or antagonistic tension on the elongated muscles, it hinders and weakens your movement. It acts like a brake, causing premature fatigue, generally associated only with new activity-demanding different muscles to perform. A coordinated, natural athlete is able to perform in any sporting activity with ease because he moves with little antagonistic tension. On the other hand, the novice performs with excessive tension and effort, creating a lot of wasted motions. Although this coordination trait is more a native talent in some than in others, all can improve it by intensive training.

## CHAPTER 2 : The On-Guard Position

### A Perfect Stance

A stance too narrow provides you speed,  
But leaves you imbalance which you don't need.

A stance too wide gives you power,  
But you'll soon learn you're a bit slower.

There must be a stance that you can use  
To keep you in balance and to refine.

The perfect stance that will not confuse  
Is the on-guard position which does not confine.

You can maneuver with ease of motion  
As you are free from any notion.

---

### ON-GUARD POSITION

The most effective **Jeet Kune Do** stance for attacking and defending is the on-

guard position. This semi-crouch stance is perfect for fighting because your body is sturdy at all times, in a comfortably balanced position to attack, counter or defend without any forewarning movements. It provides your body with complete ease and relaxation but at the same time allows quick reaction time. From this stance the movement is not jerky but smooth, and prepares your next move without any restriction. It creates an illusion or " -body" to your opponent - concealing your intended movements.

The on-guard position is perfect for mobility. It allows you to take small steps for speed and controlled balance while bridging the distance to your opponent, and camouflages your timing. Since the leading hand and foot are closest to the target, 80 percent of the hitting is done by them. Bruce Lee, a natural right-hander, adopted the "southpaw" or "unorthodox" stance because he believed that the stronger hand and foot should do most of the work.

It is important to position your arms, feet and head. From the southpaw stance, the chin and shoulder should meet halfway - the right shoulder raised an inch or two and the chin dropped about the same distance. At this position the muscles and bone structure are in the best possible alignment, protecting the point of the chin. In close-in fighting, the head is held vertically with the edge of the chin, pressed to the collarbone, and one side of the chin is tucked to the lead shoulder. Only in rare, extreme, defensive maneuvers would the point of the chin be tucked into the lead shoulder. This would angle your head and turn your neck into an unnatural position. Fighting in this position would tense the lead shoulder and arm, prevent free action and cause fatigue because you would lack support of the muscles and straight bone alignment.

## CHAPTER 3 : Footwork

### Footwork

The art of mobility  
is the essence of fighting.

If you're slow on your feet,  
— you'll be late in hitting.

A skilled fighter can shift  
— to evade most blows.

His body is "light as a feather,"  
— when he fights all foes.

He moves like a stallion

—galloping with grace

Instead of a kangaroo  
—leaping high in space.

---

## **FOOTWORK**

In jeet kune do mobility is heavily emphasized because hand-to-hand combat is a matter of movements. Your application of an effective technique depends on your footwork. Speed of your footwork leads the way for fast kicks and punches. If you are slow on your feet, you will be slow with your hands and feet, too.

The principle of fighting is the art of mobility: to seek your target or to avoid being a target. Footwork in jeet kune do should be easy, relaxed and alive but firm in movement, while the traditional, classical horse stance is not functional because it is slow and awkward. In fighting you are required to move in any direction instantly.

Proper footwork is good balance in action, which contributes to hitting power and avoidance of punishment. Good footwork will beat any kick or punch. A moving target is definitely more difficult to hit than a stationary one. The more skillful you are with your footwork, the less you have to use your arms to block or parry kicks and punches. By moving deftly you can elude almost any blow and at the same time prepare your fists and feet to attack.

Besides evading blows, footwork allows you to cover distance rapidly, escape out of a tight corner and conserve your energy to counter with more sting in your punch or kick. A heavy slugger with poor footwork will exhaust himself as he futilely attempts to hit his opponent.

The best position for your feet is where you can move rapidly in any direction and so you are well balanced to withstand blows from any angle. The feet must always be directly under your body. The on-guard stance present proper body balance and a natural alignment of your feet.

## **CHAPTER 4 : Power Training**

### **Power**

Power in hitting  
—depends not on your strength.

But it is the way,  
\_\_\_\_you throw your blows.

It is not whether  
\_\_\_\_you are close or at length.

If you're too near,  
\_\_\_\_use your striking elbows.

But it is the hands that  
\_\_\_\_you'll employ the most

In a sparring session  
\_\_\_\_or a martial arts meet.

And when it is all over,  
\_\_\_\_hope you can silently boast

That you have learned  
\_\_\_\_to hit with speed and power.

---

## **POWER TRAINING**

Power in hitting is not based strictly on strength. How many times have you seen a boxer who is not muscular but packs a wallop in his punch? And then you see another, heavily muscular boxer who can't knock anyone down. The reason behind this is that power isn't generated by your contractile muscles but from the impetus and speed of your arm or foot. Bruce Lee, a 130-pounder, was able to hit harder than a man twice his size, because Lee's blow with a heavy force behind it, was much faster.

In jeet kune do you do not hit by just swinging your arm. Your whole body should participate in the impetus - your hips, shoulders, feet and arms. The inertia of your punch should be a straight line in front of your nose - using it as the guiding point. The punch originates not from the shoulder but from the center of your body.

Straight punching or kicking is the basis for scientific and artistic fighting. It is a modern concept in fisticuffs derived from the knowledge of body leverage and makeup. A punch from your arm alone doesn't supply enough power. Your arms should be used strictly as bearers of your force; and the correct application of your body should furnish the power. In any power punching, the body must be balanced and aligned with your lead foot, forming a straight line. This section of your body is the mainstay, functioning as an axis to generate power.

Before you can punch with power, you must first learn to clench your fists properly, otherwise you are liable to injure them.

# CHAPTER 5 : Speed Training

## Speed

Speed in fighting depends not  
—just on your hands and feet in swiftness,

But other attributes such as  
—nontelegraphic moves and awareness.

Speed in fighting is to hit  
—your foe without yourself being hit.

This can only be done by hours  
—of practice and being completely fit.

Speed in fighting is no good  
—without the power that goes with it.

---

## **SPEED TRAINING**

What is speed in fighting? Is it the velocity of your hands, feet and body movement? OR are there other, prevalent essentials in a good fighter? What is a good fighter?

To answer these questions: A good fighter is one who can hit his opponent quicker, harder, without much perceptible effort, and yet avoid being hit. He doesn't only possess a pair of fast hands and feet or quick body movement but has other qualities such as nontelegraphic moves, good coordination, perfect balance and keen awareness. Although some people are endowed with a few of these qualities, most of these attributes are developed through hard training.

All the strength or power you have developed from your training is wasted if you are slow and can't make contact. Power and speed go hand-in-hand. A fighter needs both to be successful.

One immediate way to increase your speed at impact is to "snap" or "whip" your hand or foot just before contact. It is the same principle as the overhand throw. For example, if you throw a baseball with a full swing and snap your wrist at the last movement or the tail end of your swing, the ball will have more velocity than without the snap. Naturally, the longer swing with a snap will have more acceleration at the end than a shorter swing with a snap. A 12-foot whip, flung exactly, will generate more sting than a two-foot whip.

## **BRUCE LEE - 1940-1973**

Bruce Lee flashed brilliantly like a meteor through the world of martial arts and motion pictures. Then, on July 20, 1973, in Hong Kong, like a meteor-he vanished, extinguished by sudden death. He was just 32.

Bruce Lee began his martial arts studies with wing chun, under the tutelage of the late Yip Man, to alleviate the personal insecurity instilled by Hong Kong city life. Perhaps because his training enveloped him to the point of fanaticism, he was eventually able to refine, distill and mature into a philosopher, technician and innovator of the martial arts.

After intensive study of different martial arts styles and theories, Lee developed a concept of martial arts for the individual man. This concept he later labeled **Jeet Kune Do**, the way of the intercepting fist. It has antecedents not only in his physical training and voluminous martial arts library (over two thousand books), but in his formal education as well (a philosophy major at the University of Washington, Seattle).

Lee also combined his martial arts expertise with his knowledge of acting skills and cinematic techniques, starring in several motion pictures: The Big Boss, Fists of Fury, Way of the Dragon and Enter the Dragon.

Bruce Lee's death plunged both martial arts and film enthusiasts into an abyss of disbelief. Out of their growing demand to know more of and about him, his **Tao of Jeet Kune Do** was published-which is now followed by BRUCE LEE'S FIGHTING METHOD.

This first in a series of volumes, which has been compiled and organized by his long-time friend, M. Uyehara, utilizes some of the many thousands of pictures from Lee's personal photo files. Uyehara is a former student of Bruce Lee